

Congressional Republicans have confounded skeptics. It is credible, it is gutsy, and I think it is a good plan. I think it is good for seniors. I think it is good for America, and I think it will help us to balance the needs of seniors with needs to be responsible with our tax dollars and all Americans should support this plan.

□ 1030

SAVING MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to my colleague and friend from the other side of the aisle who just spoke. Teresa McKenna in this picture was arrested because she wanted to speak about the injustices and the inequities and the lack of discussion on the issue that is most important to her and the people that she affiliates with in this country, the Medicare issue.

We have had one hearing on a proposal that will affect 40 million people, and she and other of her colleagues went to the Committee on Commerce to ask to be heard. She asked to be heard. They were told they could not be heard. She asked why, and she was told she could not be heard. Then they were arrested and taken down to the jail.

Now, the gentleman who just spoke talked about this was a left-wing type of an organization. Does she look like some left-wing radical that wants to overthrow this Government? All she wants is a fair shake for herself and her seniors.

Do you know why she wants a fair shake? Because in a report that was done very recently by the Department of Labor, we found that 60 percent of senior citizens in this country, 60 percent, have combined retirement incomes, that is the retirements and their Social Security, of \$10,000 a year or less. I will repeat that again for you. We have got 60 percent of our seniors living on \$10,000 a year or less in this country.

What the National Council of Senior Citizens do is they go out and help these low-income seniors get low-income jobs so they can have some supplement to that \$10,000.

What is going on here is my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have a proposal that will take \$270 billion out of Medicare in order to pay for a tax cut which comes out to about \$245 billion, which predominantly goes to the wealthiest Americans. Fifty percent of that tax cut goes to people who make over \$100,000 a year. That is what this fight is about. It is about the Teresa McKenna's and the people struggling to make ends meet, and who will have \$1,000 added to their bills each year. They are living on \$10,000 and \$13,000, and we are giving tax cuts to

the wealthiest corporations and wealthiest individuals in our country.

That is why we are so upset and mad. Do we need to fix Medicare and improve it as we go along? Of course we do. We have been doing that for 30 years. But how do you fix it when the Speaker of the House, as this headline in the Washington Times indicates today, says "Gingrich places low priority on Medicare crooks. Defends cutting antifraud defenses." How do you fix it when you have that type of an attitude running this institution?

Now, let me just say with respect to this issue, not one dime, not one dime of their plan goes back into the Medicare trust fund. Not one dime. The last speaker indicated that the Medicare trustees, the three that he mentioned, Secretaries Rubin, Shalala and Reich, indicated that the trust fund was broke. But they also said it was not broke. They said basically all you need is \$90 billion. You don't need \$270 billion to fix it.

The other thing I wanted to talk about very briefly is what is happening to Medicaid. We are cutting \$182 billion out of Medicaid. What they are doing by cutting this money is they are putting in jeopardy literally hundreds of thousands of seniors from getting nursing home care that they so desperately need and impoverishing spouses in this country by changing the rules and regulations. A \$182 billion cut in Medicaid, 60 percent of which, or close to that number, goes to long-term care for our seniors in nursing homes.

Medicaid is not just a program for the poor, it is for seniors. Two out of every five children in this country get health care from Medicaid, and they are cutting it by \$182 billion. That will mean 15,000 residents in my State of Michigan will not have nursing home care next year if this cut goes through; 175,000 will not have it over a 7-year period. These are draconian cuts.

The New York Times had a headline saying the Republican Gingrich revolution is rolling back the regulations we put on nursing homes. Remember the time when people were being drugged and straitjacketed to their beds? We had serious home abuses. We changed that with humane regulations. Those are all being rolled back now. This proposal that they have to cut Medicaid also repeals the minimum quality standard for nursing homes and other quality care.

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that I hope America is paying attention to these two important issues we will be debating in the next week or so.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. KIM] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. KIM addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.

THE TRUTH ON MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the Committee on Commerce, and of all the speakers you heard this morning talking about the incident that occurred at the Committee on Commerce on the Medicare markup this week, I am the only person who was actually present for that incident. Let me tell you the truth about that incident; the facts, ma'am, just the facts, if you will.

What occurred was a woman named Teresa McKenna, who is not some poor person worried about her Medicare, she is a paid lobbyist working for the National Council of Senior Citizens, brought a few of her members into the committee room as we had opened up the session to begin marking up the bill, and they began shouting and protesting at that markup hearing.

The committees of the Congress work just like this body does. Members of the public are invited to attend and to sit in the galleries or sit in the committee rooms and to witness the process by which we mark up bills and debate them and process them through this House. Guests are always welcome, as is the press, at our committee markups.

Had Ms. Teresa McKenna brought her members into this room, into this gallery, and conducted themselves the same way, began shouting and interrupting the process, the same thing would have occurred in this House as occurred in that committee room. They were asked three times by the officers in charge at the request of the chairman to either take seats or leave the room so that we could begin our business. Three times they refused. The officers had no choice then but to escort them out of the room.

Immediately after they had been escorted under arrest outside the room, the chairman instructed the police officers involved not to press charges, but to release them to go free. In short, the committee did exactly what this House would do; it exercised its responsibility to enforce order in the process by which we debated the bill.

Teresa McKenna represents an organization headquartered here in Washington. She has been representing it for some many years now. She is a paid lobbyist for that organization. You need to know about the organization. Last year it received \$72 million of taxpayer funds to carry out their business. That is a pretty hefty sum. Can you imagine how much health care we could give to seniors in America if we spent that \$72 million on some senior health care problems. But, instead, this group got \$72 million of taxpayer monies as grants from the Federal Government to do their work.